Most people choose their first broker the way they choose a restaurant on holiday: whichever looks busiest. Shiny banner, big welcome bonus, done. I did exactly that, and it cost me three months of frustration before I worked out what actually matters.



Start with who's watching the broker. A company that talks loudly about trust but can't give you a licence number is just talking. Look the number up on the regulator's own website, not on the broker's "About us" page. It takes five minutes. Skip it and you're gambling twice. Then the pairs. Fifty-plus currency pairs sounds like a lot, and honestly, you'll probably trade five of them. But range still matters. EUR/USD and USD/JPY are a given. Having the minors and a few exotics like USD/SGD or USD/ZAR means you can act on a news headline STP forex brokers Malaysia instead of staring at a market you can't touch. Spreads are where brokers get sneaky. A tiny number on the homepage means nothing if it doubles during the US session. Open a demo account and watch EUR/USD around the New York open. That's the real price of trading there. Living in this time zone has a perk, too: the Asian session is calmer, and it's much easier on your sleep. Late-night charting is a bad habit, and I say that from experience. Money in, money out. Local bank transfers in ringgit save you conversion fees that quietly chew through profit. Test a small withdrawal early, long before you're sitting on a good win and need the cash. A broker that pays $50 without drama will probably pay $5,000. One that drags its feet on $50 won't get better. Leverage deserves a blunt word. Higher is not better. At 1:500, one bad candle can wipe an account before lunch. Plenty of experienced traders run far lower and sleep fine. The platform should feel boring, in a good way. MetaTrader 4 or 5 does the job for most people, and the mobile app shouldn't lag when you're closing a trade from a queue at the bank. While you're at it, message support at some odd hour, say 2 a.m. on a Sunday. How fast and how human the reply is tells you what happens when something actually breaks. None of this removes the risk. Most retail traders lose money, and a good broker can't change that, it only removes the avoidable mistakes. So treat your first month as paid education, trade small, and keep a simple journal of why you entered each trade. Your future self will be oddly grateful, and probably a little embarrassed.